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Leading learning and skills

# Supporting Care Leavers in Accessing Employment and Skills Training

A Guide for LSC  
Strategic Staff

**Guide 1**

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# Foreword



John Korzeniewski  
Regional Director

The LSC has a single goal – *to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards*. It's a goal that is often interpreted in terms of business and employment – giving people the skills to achieve the career they want, helping employers access training to improve their bottom line – but this is only half the story. The LSC also supports work to help society's more vulnerable people access training and employment, and no group is more vulnerable than that of young people leaving care.

The 2007 White Paper *Care Matters: The Time for Change* made it clear that despite advancements in recent years there was still a significant gap between the outcomes of young people in care and leaving care and all young people.

Only 45% of looked after children in the North West achieved five or more GCSEs grade A\* to G in 2007, compared to 91% of all children across the region. 34% of 19 year old care leavers in the region who had been in care at the age of 16 were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

In 2008 the LSC in the North West commissioned Amion Consulting to develop Good Practice Guides for professionals working with care leavers. While the LSC recognises that local authorities lead on provision for care leavers we also believe that by working closely together and sharing good practice, we can make a real difference to the lives of thousands of young people across the region.

This guide is one of a series of five aimed at LSC strategic and operational staff, strategic managers in statutory organisations, learning and training providers and leaving care teams. Each guide includes an overview of the policy context in which support for care leavers is being developed, key contacts, and frequently asked questions. They also feature case studies from across the North West, which illustrate how different partners are working together to meet the needs of care leavers.

The guides, however, are just a starting point, and best practice can only be developed through close communication, co-operation, and support. We are all aware of the huge challenges many care leavers face; by working together we can address these challenges, and help greater numbers of care leavers to access appropriate training and employment.

*John Korzeniewski*

# Section 1

## Introduction and Guide Structure

### Introduction

Looked after children and care leavers are some of the most deprived and excluded people in society. Over the last year, NW LSC has commissioned development work by Amion Consulting, to support the production of a series of Good Practice Guides to:

- raise awareness of the particular circumstances/issues affecting care leavers, many of whom are vulnerable learners;
- raise awareness of care leavers' specific support needs amongst its own staff and its training providers;
- assist training providers and FE colleges to identify how best to support care leavers;
- facilitate an increase in the numbers of care leavers accessing, completing and sustaining skills training and apprenticeships; and
- contribute to the national and regional developments which will assist the corporate 'family' to meet its obligations to care leavers and looked after children.

This Guide is one of a series of five – each of which focuses on individual corporate parent 'partners' – and includes LSC strategic and operational staff, senior strategic staff within statutory organisations, training and learning providers who deliver LSC funded programmes, as well as Leaving Care staff.

Together, the Guides are a statement of NW LSC's commitment to its role as part of the 'corporate family' to support care leavers in successfully accessing training and employment.

### Guide Structure

This Guide is structured as follows:

**Section 2** provides an overview of the policy context and research, in which support for care leavers is being developed. It also outlines the national and North West profile of care leavers as at November 2008.

**Section 3** provides good practice examples of the various ways in which the LSC and its partners can work together to provide personalised route ways for care leavers looking to access and complete training and employment support locally. It includes case studies of partner support which has been designed to target the specific needs of care leavers, and of vulnerable learners more generally – looking at the ways in which support can be integrated into mainstream provision where possible.

**Section 4** comprises frequently asked questions as a practical guide for LSC senior staff to be used to guide operational activities

The annexes provide details of specific contacts in relation to Leaving Care teams, ConneXions' Looked After Children leads and LSC funded initiatives.

*“Looked after children and care leavers are some of the most deprived and excluded people in society...”*

# Section 2

## The National Profile of Care Leavers and the Policy Context

### The National Profile of Looked After Children and Care Leavers

An annual profiling survey of looked after children undertaken by the Department for Children, Schools and Families provides an insight into the scale and nature of young people in and leaving the care of local authorities across England.

- At 31st March 2008 there were 59,500 children aged 0-19 years in local authority care in England.
- Just over half of all looked after children were male (56%) and almost two thirds of looked after children were aged 10 years and above. 74% of looked after children were 'white' (74%).
- 62% are in the care of the local authority owing to abuse or neglect (62%), 11% to family dysfunction (11%) and 9% to absent parenting.
- 71% were in the care of a foster placement, of which two-thirds were placed within the local authority boundary.

Across England there are some 5,800 care leavers now aged 19 years who were previously in local authority care aged 16.

- 66% of care leavers are engaged in education, employment or training (this figure includes both full and part-time participation)
- Just 7% of care leavers were studying at university at March 2008.
- 29% of care leavers meanwhile are completely disengaged from education, employment or training (NEET).
- A significant majority – 42% – of care leavers aged 19 years lived independently while use was made of a wide range of transitional accommodations, including semi-independent (9%) and supported lodgings (9%); community homes (5%) and ordinary lodgings (5%). 12% of care leavers were residing with a parent or relative.
- Research suggests that looked after children are more likely to serve a prison sentence. In 2002, the Social Exclusion Unit reported that 27 per cent of the prison population and half of all prisoners aged under 25 had been looked after [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk).
- There is a higher incidence of mental health problems amongst looked after children. In 2003 the Office of National Statistics (ONS) reported that 49% of 11 to 15 year olds in local authority care had a mental disorder, compared with 11% of young people in private households.
- There is an increased likelihood of young women leaving care being pregnant or already a mother than other women. Approximately one in four young women leaving the care system is pregnant or a mother, while nearly half of female care leavers become mothers between the ages of 18 and 24 (SCIE 2004).

*“Research suggests that looked after children are more likely to serve a prison sentence...”*

# Section 2

## The National Profile of Care Leavers and the Policy Context

### The Policy Context – Support for Care Leavers

Recognition of the varied profiles of care leavers, and their potential requirements as learners, highlights the need for tailoring of support within the Learning and Skills Framework for 14-19 provision, diploma provision and apprenticeship development.

This section provides an overview of the national profile of care leavers, recent legislation and an outline of relevant research which needs to inform any local response to the needs of care leavers.

*“Councils should provide the support a good parent would give on housing, education, training and employment...”*

### What is a Corporate Parent?

Local authorities represent the ‘corporate parent’ of all young people in and leaving care.

The NW LSC recognises the need for it to work with these corporate parents, to ensure that all care leavers are fully supported in successfully accessing employment, training and learning – and to move towards and maintain a successful career path.

Corporate parenting places collective responsibility on local authorities to achieve good parenting for all children in their care, including that for those moving into adulthood and independent living. It requires ownership and leadership at a senior level, this includes all elected members.

The Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA) provides good practice in relation to corporate parenting roles, with the need for senior strategic ownership being the key to success. *If This Were My Child – A Councillor’s Guide to Being a Good Corporate Parent, 2003* (PDF, 16 pages, 95 KB) outlines key corporate parent tasks for local authority members, which include:

- ensuring all councillors understand their corporate parenting responsibilities and are committed to fulfilling them. Produce information on the corporate parenting role;
- ensure the corporate strategy gives a high priority to the council’s role as corporate parent;
- creating a corporate parenting group to improve outcomes for looked-after children, with representation of looked-after children in the group;
- recognition by local authority corporate parents that the needs of looked-after children and care leavers cannot be met by a single agency and actions to ensure that the council works closely with key partners. Children and Young People’s plans should set out how agencies will work together to support looked-after children;
- councils should provide the support a good parent would give on housing, education, training and employment. This can make the difference between achieving independence and requiring long-term help;
- councils must keep in touch with care leavers until they are at aged 21, and beyond if they are in education; and
- regular management information reports on looked-after children.

## Leaving Care Services' Roles

**Local Leaving Care services support care leavers in every aspect of their lives, with particular emphasis on accommodation, education, health and personal development.**

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, required Local Authorities to give a far more consistent 'aftercare' service to their care leavers (young people aged between 16-21 who had been in local authority care prior to this age):

- to better prepare them whilst they were in care, for the time when they came to leave care;
- to encourage local authorities to keep such young people in care longer; and
- to extend better support to them when they did come to leave care.

[http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/\\_files/54846B7D5EFEC58C5A0E652683A3CE8F.pdf](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/54846B7D5EFEC58C5A0E652683A3CE8F.pdf)

The main provisions include:

- a duty on local authorities to assess and meet the needs of eligible people aged 16 and 17 year olds who are in care or care leavers. Wherever the young person lives, the duty will rest with the local authorities to keep in touch with care leavers until they are at least 21;
- every eligible young person in care to have, when they turn 16, a comprehensive pathway plan mapping out a clear route to independence;
- local authorities to provide all eligible 16 to 17 year olds who are in care or are care leavers with personal and practical support to meet their objectives identified in their pathway plans;
- each young person to have a young persons advisor who will co-ordinate provision of support and assistance to meet the needs of the young person. Particular emphasis will be placed on helping the young person into education, training or employment;
- a financial regime for care leavers to ensure they have comprehensive financial support; and
- continuing assistance for care leavers aged 18-21 especially with education and employment. Assistance with education or training continues to the end of the agreed programme, even if it takes someone past the age of 21.

In summary, the Act aims to ensure that care leavers have the same opportunities as other young people in the community and to reduce the numbers of care leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The need for specific action targeted on the needs of care leavers was then highlighted in 2007, in the White Paper *Care Matters: The Time for Change*. This identified that, despite improvements in socio-economic outcomes in recent years, there remained a significant gap between the outcomes of those in care and leaving care and other young people. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/docs/timeforchange.pdf>

Through *Public Service Agreement Delivery Agreement 16: To Increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training*, the government identified care leavers as one of four priority groups, with a key priority being that of improved access to quality education, training and employment for this group.

*“Local Leaving Care services support care leavers in every aspect of their lives, with particular emphasis on accommodation, education, health and personal development...”*

# Section 2

## The National Profile of Care Leavers and the Policy Context

Building on this, in January 2009, *New Opportunities for the Future* White Paper was published by the Cabinet Office. This identified substantial support for young care leavers, outlining specific actions including:

- a national employment support programme for care leavers, as part of the wider drive to improve the quality of transition from care to adulthood. The Government will fund the National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) for the next two years to work with local authorities to develop and test models of support for care leavers into employment. NCAS will work with nine local authorities in year one with a view to extending support to half of all local authorities in year two as the first phased step of a national roll-out;
- as part of this new programme, the creation of a national network of employers from the private, public and third sectors who will sign up to a commitment to develop employment support initiatives in their organisations for young people leaving care. Employers will offer opportunities for work experience and mentoring support, matched to the specific needs of the young person and including a package of training;
- from September 2009, the offer of an Apprenticeship place to all suitably qualified care leavers by the National Apprenticeship Service which will work with NCAS; and government intend to make this a legal entitlement from 2013; and
- over time, all care leavers will be offered an enhanced career planning pathway that will cover their next two to eight years, using a personalised, flexible model to help tackle barriers to work.

In addition, over the next two years NCAS, government offices and specialist youth homelessness advisors will work with local authorities as part of government's drive to improve access to suitable accommodation for care leavers.

The LSC 14-19 Board is considering a range of key actions to support these proposals (*Young People Not in Education, Employment and Training – Proposed LSC approach up to April 2010 – 14-19 Board – 13 February 2009*).

*“Employers will offer opportunities for work experience and mentoring support, matched to the specific needs of the young person and including a package of training...”*

## Needs of Care Leavers – Recent Research

Published by the Action of Aftercare Consortium, *Setting the Agenda; what's left to do in leaving care? (2004)* provides a useful analysis of the research focusing on care leavers' experiences.

As part of the analysis three groups of care leavers were identified:

### Group 1

The moving on group are likely to have had stability and continuity in their lives. They are highly resilient, welcome increasing independence and are able to make good use of the help offered to them.

### Group 2

The survivors group have experienced more instability, movement and disruption. Positive outcomes for this group are likely to rely much more heavily on the quality of aftercare support that they receive.

### Group 3

The victims group has had the most damaging pre-care experiences and in the main care was unable to compensate for this. They are the most likely to be unemployed, homeless, lonely, isolated and to suffer from mental health problems. Aftercare support was unlikely to help them overcome their poor starting points but was very important to them.

This review of research also identified some important issues with regard to targeting and outcomes, including:

- a key gap in planning for specific groups of care leavers including asylum seekers, young disabled people (including post 18), young parents, young people disaffected from learning, post-18, and post custody; and
- multi-agency working was improving but there was still some way to go especially in working with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and in terms of transitions to adult services.

While improvements were noted generally in education, training and employment outcomes, it was felt that there was a lack of such opportunities for less able young people, <http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/uploads/media/29/341.pdf>.

*“It was felt that there was a lack of such opportunities for less able young people...”*

# Section 2

## The National Profile of Care Leavers and the Policy Context

### Employment & Skills' + Training Needs of Care Leavers

The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) [www.nlcas.org](http://www.nlcas.org) and Rainer Trust's ESF funded project: *What Makes The Difference?* (WMTD), worked to identify ways to improve poor outcomes for older children in care and leaving care in England (2006-08).

Their research with care leavers identified:

- that there has been a real focus on improving education outcome for care leavers over the last few years and some improvements have been made, although achievements continue to be measured against hard outcomes predominantly GCSE results, which is a limited measure of individual achievement;
- that a significant number of care leavers are, for various reasons, unlikely or unwilling to achieve within formal education settings – preferring more hands on, practical learning opportunities such as work experience, traineeships/apprenticeships and employment;
- low levels of self-confidence – care leavers did not believe in themselves and often had no understanding of how to behave in the workplace;
- some care leavers do not feel ready to engage with work, given that their housing circumstances were unsettled and they were experiencing other disruptions in their personal lives;
- often care leavers were reported to have short-term aims such as getting any job, rather than having long-term career aspirations;
- some were judged to lack the relevant skills or qualifications to compete in the labour market;
- many felt they required additional support due to their special needs; disability, physical and/or mental health;
- a key issue was the need for improved motivation of those young people who had been NEET or 'doing nothing' for a considerable period of time.
- a need for care leavers to be supported in having realistic expectations, so that they would not expect to achieve too much too soon; and
- that a range of other issues were impact upon care leavers' chances of entering employment, including pregnancy and parenthood, behavioural problems and other social barriers including homelessness and offending.

*“There has been a real focus on improving education outcome for care leavers over the last few years and some improvements have been made...”*

# Section 3

## Care Leavers: the North West Profile

This section provides a statistical overview of the profile of care leavers in the North West as of March 2008. It goes on to outline key approaches to partnership working between the LSC and 'corporate parent' partners (including local authorities strategic leads, leaving care teams, and training providers).

These approaches are exemplified by some local good practice examples, gathered by Amion Consulting as part of the review of North West activities supporting care leavers. Contact details for each of these are provided where possible.

*"Of North West local authorities, Manchester has responsibility for the greatest number of looked after young people... followed by Lancashire..."*

### The North West Profile of Looked After Children and Care Leavers – 2008

- The DCSF profile of North West looked after children revealed that at 31st March 2008, there were 10,300 children in local authority care. 70% (7,190) of these young people were looked after as a consequence of abuse or neglect.
- Of North West local authorities, Manchester has responsibility for the greatest number of looked after young people (1,425), followed by Lancashire (1,280).
- In 2008, 29% of North West children in care were placed outside the geographical boundary of the responsible local authority.
- There were 1,680 LAC in the North West who were 16 years and over on 31st March 2008 and 1,090 young people who were 16 or older who had ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31st March 2008.
- 500 of the 790 (63%) North West care leavers aged 19 years who were in the care of the local authority aged 16 were engaged in education, training or employment. However 34% were not in education, employment or training (NEET), and the remaining 3% were not in touch with the local authority.
- In the North West 39% of care leavers aged 19 years were living independently at this time and just 16% were living with parents or relatives. Community homes and various forms of supported living accommodation account for the remaining care leavers.
- Only 72% of North West looked after children sat at least one GCSE in 2007 and just 68% obtained one or more GCSEs at grade A\*-G. In comparison, 97 per cent of all children in the North West obtained one GCSE at grade A\*-G.
- 45% of North West looked after children achieved 5 GCSE grades A\* to G, compared to 91% of all children across the region (2007).
- 13% of LAC in the North West achieved 5 A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) compared to 60% of all children in the North West (2007).

# Section 3

## Care Leavers: the North West Profile

*“At 31st March 2008, there were 10,300 children in local authority care...”*

**Table 1:**

Number of LAC aged 16 and over looked after on 31st March 2008 and number of LAC who left care in year ending 31st March 2008

|                         | Children aged 16+ years looked after on 31.3.08 | Children aged 16+ years leaving care between 01.04.07 and 31.03.08 |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Blackburn with Darwen   | 50  | 20   |
| Blackpool               | 40  | 20   |
| Bolton                  | 55  | 35   |
| Bury                    | 50  | 35   |
| Cheshire                | 80  | 55   |
| Cumbria                 | 85  | 60   |
| Halton                  | 15  | 15   |
| Knowsley                | 35  | 25   |
| Lancashire              | 230   | 135  |
| Liverpool               | 150   | 90   |
| Manchester              | 325   | 220  |
| Oldham                  | 50  | 35   |
| Rochdale                | 40  | 25   |
| Salford                 | 90  | 60   |
| Sefton                  | 45  | 30   |
| St Helens               | 25  | 25   |
| Stockport               | 60  | 35   |
| Tameside                | 40  | 40   |
| Trafford                | 35  | 25   |
| Warrington              | 20  | 15   |
| Wigan                   | 65  | 40   |
| Wirral                  | 80  | 60   |
| <b>North West total</b> | <b>1,680</b>                                    | <b>1,090</b>   |

Source: DSCF 2008

For further regional information go to: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/catego.shtml#m3>.

## Key Approaches to Partnership Working in Supporting Care Leavers

NW LSC is directly contributing at a regional level to NW Government Office's Care Leavers Employment & Training Workforce group, by promoting good practice in supporting care leavers through training provider base and through its social inclusion role.

The LSC's strategic staff team has a vital role in promoting effective support for care leavers and to take this agenda forward to build on activities to date:

### With Care Leavers regional strategic initiatives/programmes

- Continue LSC strategic involvement with the North West Government Office's activities looking to link local looked after children activity together, to form a NW regional approach, developing employment and training approaches. **Contact Deborah Brownlee, Director of Children and Learners, [Deborah.Brownlee@gonw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Deborah.Brownlee@gonw.gsi.gov.uk), tel. 0161 952 4470.**
- Develop strategic linkage with the National Care Advisory Service which is further developing their range of good practice in the North West, supporting care leavers into employment and training. A good practice database is available at [www.leavingcare.org](http://www.leavingcare.org). **Contact: Mike Sutcliffe, Projects Manager at National Care Advisory Service (NCAS), tel: 07793 365161, [mikesutcliffe@raineronline.org](mailto:mikesutcliffe@raineronline.org).**

### With LSC Partnership Teams

- Raise awareness of local Partnership teams through inclusion of care leavers as a key excluded group of vulnerable learners within their boundaries, and the likely intensive levels of support required by care leavers. Promote the accompanying Guide to this, aimed at this operational staff audience
- Support identification of priority actions by Teams to develop joint working around the corporate parenting agenda.
- Recognise that care leavers need specific support beyond age 19 – at least up to age 21 – this is not only a 14-19 Partnership issue.
- Review methods of engagement by LSC Partnership staff with local authorities – are they linked to the range of directorates necessary to take this agenda forward? Children & Young People's Workforce leads, HR staff, social inclusion and NEET staff, Leaving Care Team leads? Support LSC commissioning and operational staff to develop linkages with Leaving Care services particularly, to be able to identify gaps in current provision in relation to care leavers.

*“The LSC's strategic staff team has a vital role in promoting effective support for care leavers...”*

# Section 3

## Care Leavers: the North West Profile

### Blackburn with Darwen Public Sector Apprenticeship Project / Champions Group

Contact: Dawn Stead  
dawn.stead@cxl-uk.com

The project was launched in July 2006 by Blackburn with Darwen Connexions in partnership with CXL. Supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (with Working Neighbourhood's transitional funding until March 2009), the project works with 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training to help them find Apprenticeships and placements with public sector employers such as the local authority, the police force and the NHS. The key aims are to:

- increase the number of Public Sector opportunities for those young people Leaving Care (up to the age of 19);
- reduce the number of 16-18 young people in NEET within Blackburn with Darwen;
- increase the number of Apprenticeships currently offered within the Public Sector – with Lancashire LSC funding these places. They include either college or work based training as well as on the job experience. The apprenticeships are completed in 12-18 months or 36 months for Advanced Apprenticeships, with a wide range of occupational areas offered;
- increase the number of e2e (entry 2 employment) placements within the Public Sector with a view to a smooth transition onto an Apprenticeship – this is a learning programme that aims to help those who are not ready or able to enter Apprenticeship programmes, further education or employment. It can include skills work such as communication, problem solving, team working and preparation work for entering college or Apprenticeships. Can also include working towards a basic qualification;
- offer Taster Days within the Public Sector to those NEET young people who are unsure of their occupational career path; and
- promote and create a positive image of Public Sector Employers and encourage the Public Sector to serve their community more effectively.

A Local Public Service Board [LPSB] has been established as an innovative forum to develop initiatives that cut across the agendas and shared concerns of all public sector partners. ConneXions was selected as the most appropriate agency to lead on the initiative due to its focus on NEET and knowledge of the 16-19 age group. A Champions Group (including an LSC representative) has been established for the project with a representative from each organisation being nominated to champion and promote the project. Each champion has the following roles:

- to liaise with internal departments within the organisation to find additional Apprenticeships, Placements and Opportunities;
- to identify any challenges/issues within the organisation and find appropriate solutions;
- to liaise with HR/Recruitment to encourage a positive change in policies and procedures; and
- to encourage departments to give vulnerable young people within Blackburn with Darwen the opportunity to progress.

Outcomes for 2007/2008 include 22 young people being offered Apprenticeships in their chosen occupation – seven were care leavers, three have young children and four are from a BME background. 18 young people secured Public Sector e2e Placements.

### With Training Providers and FE Leads

- Ensure that mainstream LSC providers specifically market to Leaving Care Services and develop linkages (operational and strategic): particularly that those recently commissioned Key Stage 4, NEET and Youth contractors proactively engage with Leaving Care Services and consider delivery in relation to care leavers needs.
- Link with local AimHigher activities, which are supporting care leavers in accessing not only HE but also FE opportunities throughout the region.

### AimHigher Merseyside Supporting Care Leavers into Further and Higher Education in Merseyside

Contact: Deirdre Lynskey  
D.lynskey@liverpool.ac.uk  
www.ahgtm.ac.uk

Aimhigher Greater Merseyside (AHGTM) is committed to supporting positive outcomes for Looked after Children and Care Leavers. Since 2004 the AHGTM Partnership has funded the Superstars Programme which supports Y11 Looked after Children, [http://www.ahgtm.ac.uk/projects/?page\\_id=391](http://www.ahgtm.ac.uk/projects/?page_id=391)

AHGTM has also supported local HEI's in obtaining the Frank Buttle quality Award. It is anticipated that all four HEI's and LIPA will be awarded this status.

The Care Leavers in HE network has now been established and has representatives from all six greater Merseyside Local Authorities, Further and Higher Education, Connexions. This provides a forum for good practice to be shared and an opportunity for partners to develop more effective working relationships.

Discussions about how FE can develop its support for Care leavers are currently taking place and it is the intention that every Greater Merseyside college will have a designated member of staff responsible for the academic and pastoral support of care leavers; based on the designated teacher role within schools and the Frank Buttle Champion in HE.

Representatives championing care leavers also sit on the newly formed Equality and Inclusion Committee which forms part of the Governance of Aimhigher Greater Merseyside.

*“Discussions about how FE can develop its support for Care leavers are currently taking place...”*

# Section 3

## Care Leavers: the North West Profile

### With Local Authority 'Corporate Parents'

- Engage with Corporate Parent leads/officers to ensure effective partnership working and to register LSC's support for this client group
- Participate in local authorities' Corporate Parenting Strategy Groups to support them in developing Care Matters pledges which ensure that employment/training pledges are linked to mainstream provision. Each pledge must include consideration of employment and training support for looked after children and care leavers. Rainer Trust has published a guide to developing pledges – Booklet 4 in their guide to corporate parenting. Download it from [www.leavingcare.org](http://www.leavingcare.org) – go to the professional section, then the products section at the top of the menu on the left hand side.
- The National Leaving Care benchmarking Forum (of which Blackburn and Lancashire are members) is also working on a template for pledges specifically for leaving care.

### Manchester – Presidents' Meeting

Contact: Ruth Welford-Hunte, Making It Work  
Barnardo's Leaving Care Team  
[ruth.welfordhunte@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:ruth.welfordhunte@barnardos.org.uk)

A quarterly meeting of Manchester's key partners from education, employment and young peoples' services shares information and network contacts with a view to enhancing provision for looked after children and care leavers. The President's group brings together representatives from ConneXions, Leaving Care Services, Barnardo's, 14-19 Strategy Group, Aim Higher, FE sector, Manchester City Council education department, Asylum Seekers Service and the sub-regional NEET co-ordinator.

- Promote joint working towards integrating mainstream services and specific local initiatives into a coherent 'progression pathway' supporting care leavers into employment and training.
- With other strategic partners, identify the scale and potential demand from care leavers for mainstream employment and training services and ensure that those services commissioned are able to offer consistent, personalised support to care leavers – from initial enquiry through to course completion.

*"Each pledge must include consideration of employment and training support for looked after children and care leavers..."*

## With Local Authority Operational Staff

- Current profiles of looked after children and care leavers in each locality can be provided through local authority's Children and Young People Department which each has (or commissions) a Leaving Care team. These contacts are listed in Annex 1 of all Guides.
- Local ConneXions service (ConneXions Cheshire and Warrington, ConneXions Cumbria, ConneXions Lancashire, ConneXions Greater Merseyside, ConneXions Greater Manchester) also have a Looked After Children lead - these contacts are detailed in the annex.
- Through Partnership Directors, engage key strategic staff within local authorities (NEET Co-ordinators, YOS Managers, Social Inclusion leads, 14-19 Strategy leads, Regeneration leads) who are tackling/devising engagement strategies with youth NEET groups, to ensure that care leavers' needs are integrated and recognised.
- Promote engagement with LA Apprenticeship leads within Local Authorities to raise their awareness of the funding opportunities available from LSC
- Develop regional LSC work to date, by linking up with the approaches being developed by local authorities in Merseyside to ensure integration with mainstream approaches.

## Open Doors Programme Liverpool City Council – Liverpool

**Contact:** **Contact: Caroline Lodge**  
**Workforce Strategy Manager (Entry to Employment)**  
[caroline.lodge@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.lodge@liverpool.gov.uk)

Running throughout 2005-08, Liverpool City Council's Diversity and Social Inclusion Team provided training placement opportunities to groups of people currently under-represented amongst Liverpool City Council's workforce including, amongst others, people with disabilities, BME groups and young people. In 2007-08 this team worked closely with managers across the local authority and with Connexions LAC leads to design a programme called 'Open Doors' which was intensive in its support to care leavers.

A bid for £143,000 of neighbourhood renewal funds to provide NEET care leavers with training placement opportunities within the Council was successful in August 2007. Interest from departmental managers was high, and fifteen work placement opportunities were identified including business administration and horticulture

The Open Doors Programme commenced in November 2008 through a phased selection process which included four recruitment days and intensive interviewing skills sessions for care leavers, who were identified through the Leaving Care Team and Connexions. Ten young people were appointed onto the 43 week programme.

Before being placed within local authority departments, care leavers participated in an intensive four day personal development workshop delivered by an charitable organisation called Youth At Risk, (which were followed up with monthly personal development sessions). Throughout the programme, care leavers were supported by dedicated employment coach, who worked closely with care leavers to address pastoral issues, sharing personal circumstance information with departmental managers as necessary. Each care leaver was allocated a mentor within the department with which they were placed, with these staff receiving training to prepare them for their role. A two day 'Springboard to Success' mentor workshop was delivered by Kaizen Partnership Ltd.

Each care leaver worked towards a related Level 2 NVQ qualification and attended college one day each week. Reaseheath College and Training Plus were appointed as NVQ providers with these training providers being flexible around course start dates. Participants worked a standard 35 hour week and received a training allowance above minimum wage payment, supplemented in part by DSI funds.

The Open Doors Programme achieved a retention level of 80%. Seven of the ten starters completed their Level 2 NVQ within the 43 weeks, the flexible delivery of which has permitted one young person to continue to work towards theirs. The young care leavers have progressed into a number of permanent and temporary positions largely within Liverpool City Council. These have included temporary horticulture contracts, pest control attendant, Personal Assistant and E2E administrator.

# Section 3

## Care Leavers: the North West Profile

### Merseyside Learning Together Partnership

Contact: Martin Jones

LTP Workforce Development Co-ordinator martinjones@wirral.gov.uk

and /or Chris Wilkinson

Partnership Co-ordinator, Learn Together  
chris.wilkinson@f2s.com

The Partnership identified a need for local authorities to take more responsibility as corporate parents to provide work experience and employment opportunities for young people preparing to leave care. The vast majority of people usually receive their first job or work experience through family, friends and contacts. Young people in care don't have these types of personal contacts and therefore their 'corporate parent' should seek to provide these opportunities from within the 'family firm'. Local authorities are often the largest employers in the area, with an extensive variety of different services and departments which could potentially offer a vast array of learning opportunities to care leavers.

- An important sub-regional initiative in the North West which is seeking to develop local authority approaches to support for care leavers in relation to employment and training. The Learn Together Partnership is a collaboration between Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, Warrington and Wirral Children's Services. The intention of the partner authorities is to increase the level of joint activity to meet the challenges of high quality service provision within the emerging Children's Services agenda.

- It is developing proposals to promote the training and employment of care leavers in the partnership region. The Partnership is now specifically examining the feasibility of developing an apprenticeship for a generic children's services worker, with the intention of earmarking such opportunities to provide sustainable employment for care leavers and other vulnerable learners.

Recommendations to date include the following:

- There is clear evidence that priority access and ring-fencing arrangements are extremely effective tools in providing opportunity for care leavers and vulnerable learners.
- Local authorities should ensure that they provide an effective mechanism to respond to any request for a work placement related to a course of study for children in care or care leavers.
- A gap in provision for those young people needing to address employability issues could be met through a pre-employment training scheme.
- Some children in care and care leavers will access the new Diplomas through conventional pathways. This should be supported and encouraged. However, the Diploma is not likely to be effectively utilised to offer additional opportunity to children in care or care leavers.
- Local authorities should consider offering advanced apprentices the same level of support as that available to those in higher education.

### With the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

- The new National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) takes end-to-end responsibility for the Apprenticeships programme, including determining and publishing the strategy for expansion, and with ultimate accountability for national delivery of targets.
- Work with NAS to support the proposals of the New Opportunities White Paper (see section 2) to promote the needs of care leavers in apprenticeship provision.
- Link Partnership teams with National Apprenticeship Vacancy matching staff, to raise awareness of this client group.

### With Employers

Again, building on the proposals outlined in the New Opportunities White Paper (see Section 2), develop local approaches to break down preconceptions about care leavers amongst employers.

- Consider the promotion of Train to Gain in relation to care leavers.
- Promote awareness of the needs of the client group with Local Employer Partnership teams.

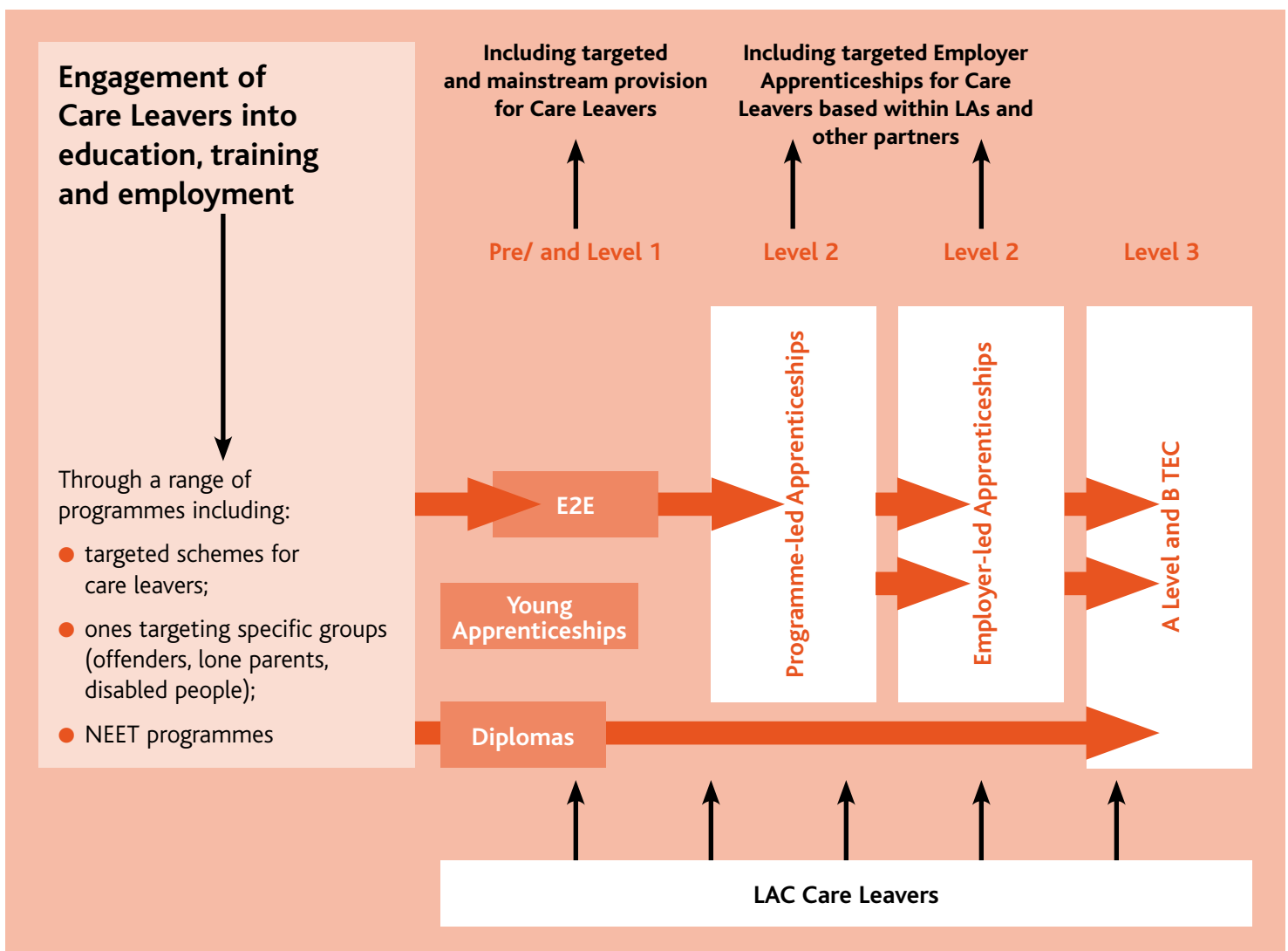
# Section 4

## Summary

Young care leavers face huge life challenges at the ages of 16-19, with issues of accommodation, managing finances, and sometimes coping with being socially isolated if they are now living alone, after leaving residential care. Many are trying to live independently for the first time – usually much earlier than many young people who live with parents until their twenties. Many young care leavers have very poor educational attainment and very negative experiences of formal education – having been moved many times around various placements.

As a result many care leavers need intensive support – beyond that offered on standard E2E provision. To meet these needs many local authority Leaving Care teams now offer tailored support (see all Guides for examples) which engages care leavers and offers intensive and ongoing personal development support. In addition some are working with training providers to develop more personalised support as part of standard delivery.

By supporting joint working to prioritise positive outcomes for these socially excluded young people leaving care, the LSC is aiming to support moves towards effective and sustainable Progression Pathways for Care Leavers.



# Section 4

## Summary

Key approaches to support moves towards this have been detailed in this Guide. The priority development work includes:

- Through working with Local Authority Leaving Care Teams, Social Inclusion Teams and Employment Leads, the LSC need to look at ways of linking various types of provision together, so that care leavers have a progression pathway towards training and eventually sustainable employment.
- This needs to be linked to local authority Corporate Parent Strategy Groups, in order to pull together what is currently a very disparate range of activities (located within HR leads, ConneXions, Leaving Care Teams and contracted voluntary sector organisations).
- Staff development – required to raise awareness of this highly excluded group of young people, with Leaving Care Services contributing to this.
- Other members of the corporate parent ‘family’ – eg PCT and key ETE providers need to be included in this process to ensure that care leavers’ profile is championed at a senior strategic level.
- The linkages need to be made between mainstream employment and training providers and Leaving Care services, to ensure that all care leavers’ needs are met, not just the few who may be able to, or want to access specialist support.

*“Many local authority Leaving Care teams now offer tailored support... which engages care leavers and offers intensive and ongoing personal development support...”*

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*Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People  
in Public Care*  
(PDF, 114 pages, 546 KB)  
Department for Children, Schools and Families  
*Guidance on health of looked-after children*  
Department of Health

# Annex 1

## Leaving Care Contacts – North West Local Authorities

| Local Authority                  | Contact Name / Department  | Address / Telephone / Email                                |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Cheshire &amp; Warrington</b> |  |  |
| <b>Cheshire</b>                  | <b>Lesley Goode</b><br>Development and Performance<br>Manager, Leaving Care Team | <b>01270 669 944</b><br>lesley.goode@cheshire.gov.uk       |
| <b>Warrington</b>                | <b>Terry Irvine</b><br>Acting Team Manager                                       | <b>01925 444 051</b><br>tirvine@warrington.gov.uk          |
| <b>Lancashire</b>                |  |  |
| <b>Blackburn with Darwen</b>     | <b>Nick McPartlan</b><br>Leaving Care Lead                                       | <b>01254 666 501</b><br>nick.mcpartlan@blackburn.gov.uk    |
| <b>Blackpool</b>                 | <b>Penny Maddock</b><br>Team Manager   | <b>01253 477653</b><br>penny.maddock@blackpool.gov.uk      |
| <b>Lancashire</b>                | <b>Mark Cartridge</b><br>County Residential Manager                              | <b>01524 585 520</b><br>Mark.Cartridge@SSD.lancsc.gov.uk   |
| <b>Cumbria</b>                   |  |  |
| <b>Cumbria</b>                   | <b>Alan Culley</b><br>Service Manager, Pathways                                  | <b>01228 227461</b><br>alan.culley@cumbriacc.gov.uk        |
| <b>Greater Manchester</b>        |  |  |
| <b>Bolton</b>                    | <b>Jane Booth</b><br>Head of Service, Leaving Care                               | <b>01204 337 470</b><br>jane.booth@bolton.gov.uk           |
| <b>Bury</b>                      | <b>Catherine Slater</b><br>Head of Service                                       | <b>0161 253 6305</b><br>c.slater@bury.gov.uk               |
| <b>Manchester</b>                | <b>Ruth Welford-Hunter</b><br>Manager  | <b>0161 226 6722</b><br>ruth.welfordhunte@barnardos.org.uk |
| <b>Oldham</b>                    | <b>Steve Slater</b><br>Head of Service   | <b>0161 770 6585</b><br>steve.slater@oldham.gov.uk         |
| <b>Rochdale</b>                  | <b>Louise Dunston</b><br>Manager   | <b>01706 925851</b><br>louisedunston@rochdale.gov.uk       |
| <b>Salford</b>                   | <b>Michael Kelly</b><br>Principal Manager,<br>(Next Step) Leaving Care Service   | <b>0161 607 1888</b><br>michael.kelly@salford.gov.uk       |
| <b>Stockport</b>                 | <b>Ian Martin</b><br>Service Manager   | <b>0161 474 2124</b><br>ian.martin@stockport.gov.uk        |
| <b>Tameside</b>                  | <b>Christine Gerrard</b><br>Team Leader  | <b>0161 342 7630</b><br>christinegerrard@tameside.gov.uk   |
| <b>Trafford</b>                  | <b>Ged Crowther</b><br>Operations Manager,<br>Permanence & Transitions Team      | <b>0161 912 3501</b><br>gerard.crowther@trafford.gov.uk    |
| <b>Wigan</b>                     | <b>Sandy McKensie</b><br>Manager   | <b>01942 487151</b><br>s.mackenzie@wiganmbc.gov.uk         |

| Local Authority           | Contact Name / Department                           | Address / Telephone / Email                                    |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Greater Merseyside</b> |   |  |
| <b>Halton</b>             | <b>Christine Taylor</b><br>Divisional Manager (LAC) | <b>0151 471 7535</b><br>christine.taylor@halton-borough.gov.uk |
| <b>Knowsley</b>           | <b>Julie Griffiths</b><br>Employability Officer     | <b>0151 443 4083</b><br>julie.griffiths@knowsley.gov.uk        |
| <b>Liverpool</b>          | <b>Steve Moutray</b><br>Head of Service             | <b>0151 233 1910</b><br>Steve.moutray@liverpool.gov.uk         |
| <b>Sefton</b>             | <b>Gary Clark</b><br>Service Manager                | <b>0151 934 3863</b><br>Gary.clarke@cs.sefton.gov.uk           |
| <b>St Helens</b>          | <b>Anne Marie Gillespie</b><br>Service Manager      | <b>01744 677094</b><br>annemariegillespie@sthelens.gov.uk      |
| <b>Wirral</b>             | <b>Brian Ronson</b><br>Team Manager                 | <b>0151 604 3676</b><br>brianronson@wirral.gov.uk              |

# Annex 2

## North West ConneXions – Looked After Children Leads

| Provider                         | Contact Name  | Telephone / Email   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Cheshire &amp; Warrington</b> |   |   |
| <b>Cheshire</b>                  | <b>Lyn Hamlett</b>  | ConneXions Cheshire and Warrington<br>Meadow Court, Meadow Street, Northwich, CW9 5FP<br><b>01606 350 753</b><br>Lyn.Hamlett@connexions-cw.co.uk                            |
| <b>Warrington</b>                | <b>Lyn Hamlett</b>  | ConneXions Cheshire and Warrington<br>Meadow Court, Meadow Street, Northwich, CW9 5FP<br><b>01606 350 753</b><br>Lyn.Hamlett@connexions-cw.co.uk                            |
| <b>Cumbria</b>                   |   |   |
| <b>Cumbria</b>                   | <b>Deborah Naylor</b>   | <b>01900 604 674</b><br><b>07919 220 194</b><br>Deborah.Naylor@connexionscumbria.co.uk  |
| <b>Greater Manchester</b>        |   |   |
| <b>Bolton</b>                    | <b>Gail Airey</b><br>PA Operations Manager  | ConneXions Bolton<br>Children's Services, Bolton Council, 3rd Floor, Paderborn House, Le Mans Crescent, Bolton, BL1 1UA<br><b>01204 334 485</b><br>gail.airey@bolton.gov.uk |
| <b>Bury</b>                      | <b>Jenny Arnall</b><br>Care Leavers Lead<br><br><b>Rob Turkas</b><br>LAC Lead   | ConneXions Bury<br>13-15 Broad Street, Bury, BL9 0DA<br><b>0161 253 7733</b><br>j.k.arnall@bury.gov.uk<br>r.i.turkas@bury.gov.uk  |
| <b>Manchester</b>                | <b>Jeff Mills</b><br>LAC Lead<br><br><b>Andy Kears</b><br>LAC Coordinator   | <b>0161 437 4288</b><br>Jeff.Mills@connexions-manchester.com<br><b>0161 226 8609</b><br>Andrew.Kears@connexions-manchester.com  |
| <b>Oldham</b>                    | <b>Vicky Sowerby</b><br>Young People of Compulsory Education Age<br><br><b>Joe McDonagh</b><br>Care Leavers in the Post-16 Sector | <b>0161 621 9459</b><br>vickysowerby@positivestepsoldham.org.uk<br><b>0161 621 9674</b><br>joemcdonagh@positivestepsoldham.org.uk   |
| <b>Rochdale</b>                  | <b>Alison Marchini</b><br>Community Operations Manager<br><br><b>Donna Baldwin</b>  | <b>01706 622 770</b><br>alison.marchini@connexions-rochdale.org.uk<br>donna.baldwin@connexions-rochdale.org.uk  |

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| <b>Lancashire</b>         |   |   |
| Blackburn with Darwen     | <b>Carla Fazackerley</b><br>Operations Manager                        | ConneXions BwD delivered by CXL<br>St Johns Court, Ainsworth Street,<br>Blackburn, BB1 6AR<br><b>01254 267 780</b><br>carla.fazackerley@cxl-uk.com  |
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| <b>Greater Merseyside</b> |   |   |
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| Knowsley                  | <b>Richard Seddon</b><br>Team Manager                                 | Kirkby ConneXions Centre<br>Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby, L32 8RX<br><b>0151 545 5400</b><br><b>07736 476 972</b><br>Richard.Seddon@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk   |

# Annex 2

## North West ConneXions – Looked After Children Leads

| Provider  | Contact Name  | Telephone / Email   |
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| Sefton    | <b>Helen Young</b>  | ConneXions Sefton<br>44 Burlington House, Crosby Road North,<br>Waterloo, Liverpool, L22 LPJ<br><br><b>0151 928 8952</b><br>helen.young@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk  |
| St Helens | <b>Karen Warriner</b>   | <b>01744 677 088</b><br>karen.warriner@connexions-gmersesyide.co.uk   |
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Publication enquiries: 0870 900 6800

Publication reference: LSC-P-NWR-090005